

SUNDAY..... NOVEMBER 6, 1881

[From the London Times]
The Science of Engineering and the

Pry.

The Parians have ceased to exist,"

said Louis XIV, when his grandson set out to take possession of the disastrous legacy of the Spanish Crown. These mountains continued to exist, in spite of this historical fact, as some of Louis's successors found to their cost. Politicians must recognize them, travellers must make *détours* to go round their flanks, or most painfully climb their steep passes or *pores*. They are still the barriers which they were in ancient times, and in spite of modern progress the people of Fox, for example, have had little connection or dealings with those of Urgel as if they lay not a few but thousands of miles apart. If a project we mentioned in our foreign news of yesterday were successful, this may be altered; there may indeed be no more Pyrenees in a true sense than that in which the saying was uttered by the Grand Monarch. The Spanish Government wish to shorten the journey by railway to Paris. They propose to introduce into the Cortez a billion-dollar-making of a railway from Somport over the line from Saragossa to, say, Conflans, a hamlet on the frontier. A tunnel would be necessary, and according to one report it would cut the Pyrenees near Somport, the well-known route which has been used time out of mind by merchants, smugglers, and soldiers desirous of entering Aragon or Navarre. The Government wish to enter into negotiations with France on the subject, in the hope that the tunnel may be constructed at the joint expense of the two countries. There are excellent reasons for undertaking the work. Paris and Madrid would be brought sixty miles nearer to each other, and the detour which must at present be taken would be avoided. The promoters of the scheme hope, too, that communication by the new route will be less precarious than it is in winter. The outside world will heartily wish success to the enterprise. Spain has never been visited by strangers in proportion to its interest and attractions. Stories of discomforts, traditions which have survived long after the realities on which they were founded have disappeared, and have repelled English travellers, who prefer hackneyed routes to the imperfectly-appreciated charms of the Peninsula. Few know intimately the beauties of the Pyrenees. An Englishman goes to one or two watering-places; he stays at Eaux-Sainte-Croix or Luchon; he makes a few excursions from the French side, and he leaves the country with the impression that he has seen it all. The Spanish side, so much the wilder, and left very much as Nature made it, is rarely explored. It will be an advantage of the new route that it will help to open a region seldom penetrated. But the real interest and value of the enterprise lie in the fact that it seems to symbolize the end of that isolation in which, amid all changes without and even within her, Spain has stood. Every hour by which the distance between Paris and Madrid is lessened is a distinct gain to civilization. Where the money for the work is to be raised and how Spanish credit is to meet the strain put upon it need not at present be too curiously inquired. We welcome the project in the interests of those who will have a new stimulus to visit a land so rich in beauty and romance; but it is still more worthy of encouragement on account of the advantages it offers to the people of that country, which it will tend to push more into the full current of modern life.

Whatever be the fate of this bill, the scheme, in some form or other, must one day succeed. This is, indeed, an age of great tunnels. If this generation has any distinct mission, it is to accomplish great engineering feats—fill valleys and lay low mountains. A peak too lofty or steep to be surmounted by steam, a river or channel too wide to be bridged, is accepted as a challenge to science and capital to do their utmost. These natural obstacles are regarded very much as a war-like State looks upon an unsubdued neighbor; conclusions with them must, sooner or later, be tried; they are still unvanquished, and that is a sufficient *caveat*. Flushed with a long series of triumphs, modern engineers, from mere love of their art, will delight to grapple with such a problem as the piercing of a great range of the mass of the Pyrenees. They will scarcely wait until commercial necessities have pronounced in favor of the scheme. Such a question is pretty sure to be taken up and studied by some of that band of enthusiasts who, luckily for humanity, never fall—enthusiasts who in their souls believe that mountains were thrown in man's way to be tunneled, and rivers were made to flow in order that they might be bridged or forced to feed canals. Modern engineering is audacious, and delights in *coups*. It likes to rear huge structures which at once charm and startle by their lightness and airiness. It puts no more iron into a girder than is sufficient, on careful computation, to bear the calculated strain; it does not think that it is good workmanship to use heavy masonry or brickwork where light materials will suffice. Engineers who have carried a tunnel under Mont Cenis through a wall of rock miles thick are not easily daunted. To go round an obstacle, or to patiently follow the windings of valleys, or to employ zigzag, gentle gradients, or to interrupt a railway at some point and get over the intervening river or hill by some other mode of locomotion than steam, is not to the taste of the modern engineer. The shortest way is generally the best in his eyes. A *détour* is suspicious; it looks as if he who sanctioned it were timid or did not know all the resources of his art. As the crow flies, or as the Roman engineer carried his military road, so proceeds the modern engineer when cautious directors do not cut his wings. This policy generally meets with, as it merits, success. In the end the quickest way is, in a commercial point of view, often the best. To risk a little capital and save an hour's journey, to study the comfort of travellers, to insure expedition, even though it be necessary to burrow under mountains, proves, as a rule, the most advantageous plan to follow. The way by which the tedious railway journey from Paris to Madrid can be reduced by two hours and a half ought to be appreciated by the public.

Engineering science could not long ignore the Pyrenees. Bounding the road to Paris, unsurmountable except by a few passes, which, for the most part, are as rough and steep as they were hundreds of years ago, they were a distinct challenge to engineering science to attempt to subdue them. The authorities at Madrid have no doubt considered the military aspects of their enterprise. They cannot be insensible to the strategic importance of the Pyrenees, which serve, always have served, as a huge wall to stand between them against their powerful neighbor. On each *cot* or *port* you find one or two ruined towers. Spain has her line of frontier fortresses, but the strongest of these is the great mountain bulwark which it is so hard for an invader to pass even when he is not attacked, and which has been so fatal to so many armies since the days when Roland and all his knights were defeated by Ganelon and fell in Roncesvalles in battle against the Moors. Apparently the Government do not see any danger from the construction of a tunnel under this barrier. They are not afraid that some fine morning a dozen trains crammed with French troops may enter Huesca, one body going to the right and seizing Saragossa, while another passes to the left and occupies Lerida and Barcelona. No doubt the example of Spain in consenting to the abolition of the Pyrenees will be cited as a good reason why we should also abolish the Channel for purposes of travel.

"My dear boy," wrote an Irishman to his son, "never put off till to-morrow what you have done to-day."—*Somerville Journal*.

AUCTION SALES—Monday.

By E. B. Cook, Auctioneer.

BANKRUPTCY.—THE STOCK OF A

NEW YORK WHOLESALE IMPORTING

HOUSE AND PUBLIC—LARGE BANKRUPT

SELLS OF DRY GOODS—OVER \$100,000

WORTH OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC DRY

GOODS AT AUCTION AT THE LARGE AND

SPACIOUS STORE, 1007 MAIN STREET, OF

POST OFFICE, RICHMOND, VA.,

COMMENCING ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24,

AND CONTINUING EVERY DAY UNTIL STOCK IS

DISPOSED OF.—Wanted, a composer; one who uses neither tobacco nor rum?" Ah, rejoined the prelate, "prisons off."

An advertisement in a New York paper reads: "Wanted, a composer; one who uses neither tobacco nor rum?" So it would appear that in some cities composers actually use these vile things. It doesn't seem credible.

The financial failures in the United States amount to about \$100,000 per week.

However it may be in the bright lexicon of the Spanish Crown. These mountains continued to exist, in spite of this historical fact, as some of Louis's successors found to their cost. Politicians must recognize them, travellers must make *détours* to go round their flanks, or most painfully climb their steep passes or *pores*. They are still the barriers which they were in ancient times, and in spite of modern progress the people of Fox, for example, have had little connection or dealings with those of Urgel as if they lay not a few but thousands of miles apart. If a project we mentioned in our foreign news of yesterday were successful, this may be altered; there may indeed be no more Pyrenees in a true sense than that in which the saying was uttered by the Grand Monarch. The Spanish Government wish to shorten the journey by railway to Paris. They propose to introduce into the Cortez a billion-dollar-making of a railway from Somport over the line from Saragossa to, say, Conflans, a hamlet on the frontier. A tunnel would be necessary, and according to one report it would cut the Pyrenees near Somport, the well-known route which has been used time out of mind by merchants, smugglers, and soldiers desirous of entering Aragon or Navarre. The Government wish to enter into negotiations with France on the subject, in the hope that the tunnel may be constructed at the joint expense of the two countries. There are excellent reasons for undertaking the work. Paris and Madrid would be brought sixty miles nearer to each other, and the detour which must at present be taken would be avoided. The promoters of the scheme hope, too, that communication by the new route will be less precarious than it is in winter. The outside world will heartily wish success to the enterprise. Spain has never been visited by strangers in proportion to its interest and attractions. Stories of discomforts, traditions which have survived long after the realities on which they were founded have disappeared, and have repelled English travellers, who prefer hackneyed routes to the imperfectly-appreciated charms of the Peninsula. Few know intimately the beauties of the Pyrenees. An Englishman goes to one or two watering-places; he stays at Eaux-Sainte-Croix or Luchon; he makes a few excursions from the French side, and he leaves the country with the impression that he has seen it all. The Spanish side, so much the wilder, and left very much as Nature made it, is rarely explored. It will be an advantage of the new route that it will help to open a region seldom penetrated. But the real interest and value of the enterprise lie in the fact that it seems to symbolize the end of that isolation in which, amid all changes without and even within her, Spain has stood. Every hour by which the distance between Paris and Madrid is lessened is a distinct gain to civilization. Where the money for the work is to be raised and how Spanish credit is to meet the strain put upon it need not at present be too curiously inquired. We welcome the project in the interests of those who will have a new stimulus to visit a land so rich in beauty and romance; but it is still more worthy of encouragement on account of the advantages it offers to the people of that country, which it will tend to push more into the full current of modern life.

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AUCTION SALES—Future Days.

By Grubbs & Williams.

Real Estate Agents and Auctioneers,

Eleventh street between Main and Bank.

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF A BRICK

WELL-BUILT DWELLING ON THE NORTHERN SIDE OF

CARY STREET, BEGINNING ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX FEET FROM THE CENTER OF CARY

STREET, AT THE END OF WHICH IS THE COTTON MARKET,

RECENTLY CONSTRUCTED BY THE TRUSTEE, JULY 17, 1881,

AT 4 o'clock P.M., THE DWELLING situated as

above, is about eight rooms, was built at a

cost of \$262.50, with interest from the

12th of September, 1881; the balance upon such

terms as the grantor or his assignee may direct;

or on his failure or death, to the trustee, to be

named by the trustee at the time of sale.

H. L. STAPLES, Trustee.

GRUBBS & WILLIAMS, Auctioneers.

No 5

By Grubbs & Williams.

Real Estate Agents and Auctioneers,

Eleventh street between Main and Bank.

THE DWELLING AND OUT-HOUSES,

WITH ONE ACRE OF LAND ATTACHED;

SITUATED ON PINE STREET, BETWEEN ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH STREETS, IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SMITH

STREET BY PUBLIC AUCTION, UPON THE

PRINCIPAL—BY BIDS OF PARTIES INTER-

ESTED.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1881,

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GRUBBS & WILLIAMS, Auctioneers.

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By Grubbs & Williams.

Real Estate Agents and Auctioneers,

Eleventh street between Main and Bank.

EXECUTOR'S SALE OF VALUABLE

BUILDINGS LOT 100, WEST SIDE OF CARY

STREET, AT THE END OF WHICH IS THE COTTON

MARKET, RECENTLY CONSTRUCTED BY THE

TRUSTEE, JULY 17, 1881,

AT 4 o'clock P.M., THE PROPERTY situated as

above, is about eight rooms, was built at a

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